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Sent: Saturday, January 04, 2014 10:32 AM
Subject: Anger Greets State Officials in Quake-Prone Texas Town

This sounds familiar!

“Maybe if the ground shakes in Austin,” said one of the speakers. “We’ll get some results.”

<http://stateimpact.npr.org/texas/2014/01/03/anger-greets-state-officials-in-quake-prone-texas-town/>

Anger Greets State Officials in Quake-Prone Texas Town

- January 3, 2014 | 10:56 AM



By [Mose Buchele](#)

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Azle, Texas - “I’ve got a crack in my hallway,” chuckled Marion LeBert as he stood in the parking lot of Azle High School.

“Oh my!” commiserated Tracy Napier. “We have sink holes in our yard. And they’ve gotten bigger since these earthquakes.”

The two were among hundreds of townspeople hoping to get answers at a meeting hosted last night by the [Railroad Commission of Texas](#), the state’s oil and gas industry regulators. The area, in Parker and Tarrant counties, didn’t experience earthquakes until recently. Now, it’s seen a swarm of over twenty minor ones in the

last two months, troubling residents and causing damage to some homes. The earthquakes would be the topic of discussion.

“I just want to kind of sit back and see what [state regulators] are gonna say,” LeBert told StateImpact Texas. “I’ve lived here 20 years and we never had anything like this till they started all the drilling and the fracking and stuff. All I want to do is get the truth out of them.”

Scientific research has shown how similar quakes are caused when [waste water from oil and gas drilling is injected](#) into underground disposal wells. This area of North Texas has many such disposal wells. But the link has not been publicly acknowledged by the Railroad Commission (though agency staff agree it exists [in internal emails and PowerPoint presentations obtained by StateImpact Texas](#)). Ahead of last night’s meeting, Railroad Commissioner David Porter had said he would talk about plans to deal with the quakes, signaling that the Commission was willing to publicly offer some answers.

As the meeting got underway, it quickly became clear that plan had changed.

Porter announced that the format of the meeting had changed to a “listening session,” and passed the unenviable task of moderating to his Chief of Staff, “in the interest of listening more intently.”

The first speaker questioned whether the Railroad Commission should be considered unbiased “since there’s so much oil and gas money that goes into the campaign of elected officials.” The question was met with applause. The response – that the Railroad Commission would not be answering questions – was met with boos.

It was a back-and-forth that characterized much of the evening.

For the next hour and a half residents shared stories of cracked foundations, sink holes, concerns over shifting propane tanks, the cost of earthquake insurance and what the quakes could mean for groundwater quality. The Mayor of the nearby town of Reno, Texas said her community’s City Hall had been damaged. Another resident said she now sleeps in her clothes for fear that she’ll have to run outside in the middle of the night during a quake.

Residents also suggested ways to determine whether disposal wells were at fault.

“Why is it we can’t shut the wells down around here for a period of time?” asked Gale Wood, pointing out that this had been done at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. “If we shut them down here for a period of time and nothing happens after a while that would be one way to determine what’s going on.”

A more dramatic solution, shouted from the audience, was to block trucks transporting waste water from entering the area.

At the end of the event, Commissioner Porter promised his Agency would continue to study the issue. As agency staff made an exit, they were followed by a gaggle of reporters. It fell on [Milton Rister](#), Commission Executive Director to answer questions.



[How Oil and Gas Disposal Wells Can Cause Earthquakes](#)

He was asked whether the agency was now publicly acknowledging the scientifically-accepted link between earthquakes and disposal wells.

“Well, there are a lot of things that cause earthquakes and I’m not going to get into speculating about,” Rister replied.

“But is it the science now recognized by the agency?” Rister was asked again.

“All I can say is there are a lot of things that cause earthquakes and we’re going to be looking into all of the potential causes including activity related to what the people were concerned about.”

‘It’s Not Disputed’

“I don’t know what the deal is,” Alan Brundrett, Mayor of the town of Azle, told StateImpact Texas after the auditorium had cleared out.

“I actually chased [Rister] down. The [state] troopers let me go by. I handed him an article and I said ‘hey look at this!’”

Brundrett has been working with the U.S. Geological Survey on an updated quake map that, he says, shows the swarm centering between two disposal wells in the area.

“It’s not disputed,” he said. “I mean there’s a July article by the USGS that’s entitled ‘[Injection Induced Seismicity](#).’ There are like five examples.”

Brundrett believes the Railroad Commission may develop a plan to combat quakes after a study by the U.S. Geological Survey on Azle is complete.

Others in the community are less hopeful.

“Maybe if the ground shakes in Austin,” said one of the speakers. “We’ll get some results.”

<http://www.kxan.com/news/texas/meeting-on-texas-earthquakes-leaves-some-residents-frustrated>

Meeting about Texas Earthquakes Leaves Residents Frustrated January 3, 2014

Residents think it was a dog and pony show!!